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**HARVESTING FLORIDA SWEET CORN**

NOVEMBER 1958

Sweet corn is one of the vegetables grown on a large scale in Florida for distant fresh markets. When the corn reaches proper ripeness, it is crated in the field, then hydrocooled at packing houses. Hydrocooling lowers the temperature and helps the commodity stay fresh en route to market. After the corn is loaded into trailer-trucks or rail cars, it is iced to further preserve quality during the long journey. Along the route, the corn is re-iced as necessary. These USDA photographs were taken in the Everglades vegetable-growing area for the Agricultural Marketing Service.



N-26462--On power-driven harvesters, workers crate the sweet corn fed to the harvester by a picking crew. Pickers feed the freshly picked ears to the moving harvester by placing them on conveyor arms extending over several rows of corn from both sides of the machine.



N-26463--Ears of picked sweet corn move on conveyor arms to harvester. From front of harvester, the corn moves on belts between two rows of workers who pack it in shipping crates. These crates are fabricated on top of the harvester and fed to the packers below.



N-26464--Here is a close-up of the picking crew at work in front of the harvester. These men are adept at quickly pulling ears from the stalks and feeding them to the conveyors and waiting packers.



N-26460--Filled wirebound crates are quickly closed by workers at the rear of the harvester. These crates are stacked in the field where trucks carry them to hydrocooling plant.

*Magazines and newspapers may obtain glossy prints of any of these photographs from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C. Others may purchase prints (8 x 10) at \$1.00 each from the same address.*





N-26452--Sweet corn is also harvested and packed without the benefits of mobile packing equipment. After being picked, the ears are loaded into field wagons and hauled to packing sites at the edge of the field where other workers pack them into wirebound shipping crates.



N-26458--During active harvesting of Florida sweet corn, tractors are kept busy pulling wagons of picked corn to the packing sites. As soon as the filled wagons are brought in, the tractor is unhitched, then hitched to an empty wagon for return trip to the field.



N-26453--Packers select ears that are well-developed and of uniform size for packing. Four to six dozen ears are packed into each crate, depending on the size of the corn. The filled crates are shoved toward workers who quickly close them.



N-26459--Crates used in packing sweet corn come flat or "knocked down" to save shipping space. At field packing sites, experienced workers are able to swiftly fabricate the crates, keeping the packers well-supplied.



N-26457--After the corn has been packed, workers load the crates onto waiting trucks. The corn is then rushed to packing houses for hydrocooling and shipment to distant markets.



N-26481--The corn is unloaded at the packing house. Chain conveyors move the crates to stacking stations to wait their turn in the cooling chamber.





N-26479--Licensed shipping point inspector of the Florida and U. S. departments of agriculture inspects sweet corn for defects before shipment. The inspector is guided by U. S. ' grade standards which USDA has established for sweet corn.



N-26491--On the spring day this photograph was taken, more than 20,000 crates of sweet corn passed through the hydrocooling system of this packinghouse. Crates of sweet corn are in background. In foreground, stacks of field-crated celery await hydrocooling.



N-26482--Crates of sweet corn move into hydrocooling room on conveyor system at side of stacking site. Trip through hydrocooler requires about 28 minutes after which the crates continue on their way to waiting rail cars or trailer-trucks.



N-26483-- Worker inside of hydrocooling room moves crates of sweet corn onto different conveyors for trip through water-spraying unit. Temperature of water is usually around 32 degrees. This is one part of the effort to maintain quality during transportation.

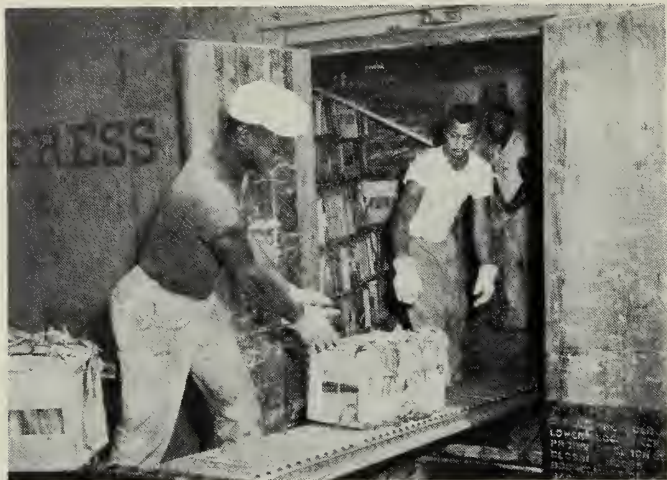


N-26485--Here, crates of sweet corn leave the hydrocooling process. Conveyors now carry them outside to waiting transit carriers.

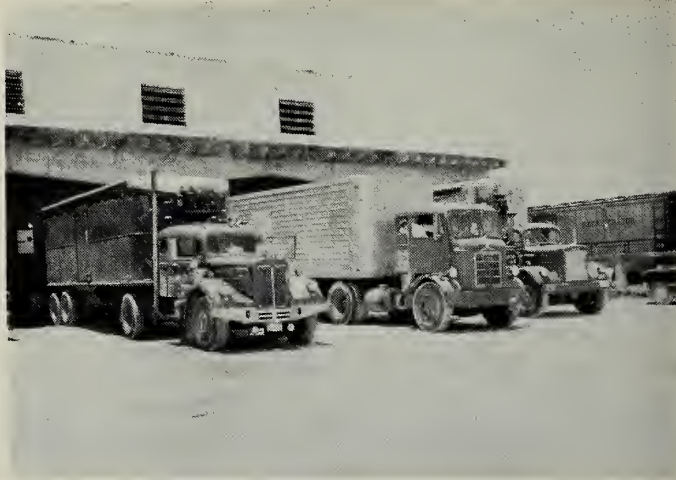


N-26582--As crates of sweet corn reach rail car, workers divert crates onto a portable conveyor leading into the car. Once inside, other workers stack the crates until the car is filled. Enough head room must be left to permit proper icing.





**N-26581--**Crates of sweet corn are loaded six layers deep into a refrigerated rail car. This stacking allows room for covering top layer of crates with a thick layer of pulverized ice.



**N-26488--**Refrigerated trailer-trucks serving distant cities wait at packing house loading platform. After being loaded, trucks are iced at nearby ice plant before beginning trip to market.



**N-26584--**Ice-crushing and blowing machinery mounted on a truck enables workers to ice car quickly. Another truck brings large blocks of ice from nearby ice plant.



**N-26585--**Trailer-truck loaded with crates of sweet corn is "snowed" with pulverized ice from rear of truck. The front and central part of the load has been iced from the side door. Pennsylvania is the destination of this truck.



**N-26588--**Crates of sweet corn in rail car receive a liberal "snowing." A flexible blower pipe leading from the truck-mounted ice pulverizer enables the worker to direct the flow of fine ice over the top layer of crates.



**N-26578--**This plant at Belle Glade, Fla., is one of many which hydrocools sweet corn, celery, and other vegetables to maintain quality during commodity transportation to distant markets.